WPI inflation in the current year after VAT was introduced. It is 3.84, a low of two years. The CPI inflation is between 3 and 3.5. So VAT has not had an adverse impace on consumer prices.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, the Empowered Committee has decided to collect uniform sales tax all over India, particularly, on tea. Out of 21 States in India which are under VAT, 20 States are collecting 4 per cent Sales Tax for tea whereas only in Andhra Pradesh, 12.5 per cent is collected. Our hon. Minister is telling us that the prices have not gone up. It is very well given in the Press, in every place it is very much visible, the prices of tea and coffee have gone up only in Andhra Pradesh. Only in Andhra Pradesh, 12.5 per cent is collected and nowhere else. I want the hon. Minister to reply to this question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Import of petroleum products

*301. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of petroleum products imported by the country and the amount spent thereon during each of the last three years;

(b) the present need for the petroleum products and the percentage of which is met by the indigenous production;

(c) whether any fresh efforts are proposed to be made by Government for the exploration of oil so as to meet the domestic demand for petroleum products and to reduce the oil bill; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The quantum of petroleum products imported during the last three years and amount spent thereon are as under:

Year	Qty. (MMT)	Value (Rs. in Crore)
2002-03	7.2	8847
2003-04	8.0	9723
2004-05	8.8	14887

(b) The country is self sufficient in refining capacity and has even developed substantial export capacity. As such demand for most petroleum products, except LPG, is largely met through indigenous production. The details of consumption/production/export and import of petroleum products during the last two years are as under:—

	2003-04 (MMT)	2004-05 (Provisional) (MMT)
Production	117.641	122.749
Imports	8.001	8.826
Consumption	107.750	111.710
Exports	14.620	17.527
Imports as % of Consumption	7.4	7.9
Exports as % of Production	12.43	14.28

(c) and (d) Appropriate measures to substantially accelerate exploratory activities for enhancing domestic oil and gas production are being taken, which include the following:

(i) New areas for further exploration have been opened up under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Under NELP, 90 exploration blocks have been awarded to various companies in four rounds of exploratory bidding held till now. Exploration work in NELP blocks has led to 19 oil/gas discoveries so far. Further 18 more blocks have been awarded under the fifth round of NELP which will further accelerate the exploration of oil and gas in the country.

(ii) Accelerated exploration programme by National Oil Companies (NOCs) in areas awarded to them on a nomination basis.

(iii) Exploration of oil and gas in the pre-NELP Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs).

(iv) Acquisition of overseas oil and gas reserves through acquisition of equity or Participating Interests (PI) in exploration acreages or producing properties.

Bangalore International Airport Project

*306. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: